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5 April 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: MACV's OB Strength Changes

1. DIA asked MACV how guerrilla strengths had been computed in the last several changes. This had not been clear in previous OB messages.

2. The answer, dated 4 April 1968, provides some interesting insights into the dynamics of OB maintenance.

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GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

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8. There are a number of obvious weaknesses in this in addition to the general problem of balancing with the series of inputs and losses which are little better than guesstimates. First, the guerrilla force is not used by the enemy in the manner described. While there is constant upgrading, there is also direct recruiting into the Main and Local Forces and the guerrillas play a unique security, support, and combat role such that ~~there~~<sup>the</sup> strength could not be allowed to fluctuate so wildly. Secondly, guerrillas are not upgraded into NVA forces who now outnumber VC Main and Local troops by about 2 to 1. Thirdly, any final balancing of the books of this type should more logically be made against the organized insurgency base.

9. Losses for January had been estimated at 15,500 because the final figures are not available until the 10-15th of the following month. Total losses for January turned out to be 5,323 greater than this, or 20,494. To make the final retroactive adjustment, these additional losses were taken from the guerrillas. An additional adjustment unique to this particular month was also made -- 10,559 guerrillas were shifted into the Main and Local Forces. These last two numbers were not given explicitly, but they are required to come up with the Main and Local Force holding of 138,500. We have not been able to determine how these upgraded personnel were taken into individual units, even though we have studied the update messages exhaustively.

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	<u>31 Jan 68 OB</u> (Original)	<u>31 Jan OB</u> (Updated)
VC/NVA	115,016	138,500
NVA	55,619	77,700
VC	59,397	60,800
Administrative Service	37,725	37,7 <sup>00</sup> <del>25</del>
Guerrillas	<u>72,605</u>	<u>56,723</u>
Total	225,346	232,923

## 10. February losses were given as:

KIA	27,000 (37,000 minus 10,000 ascribed to POL OB and civilians)
DOW-DIS	8,297 (because of the city fighting, a lower factor than .35 was used in Feb)
Military Hoi Chanh	500
POW	1,500
Non-Battle Losses	<u>2,000</u>
Total	39,297

The monthly gain is given as 7,000 infiltration and 3,500 recruitment for a total of 10,500 even though it was explained above that the recruitment figure for the January update and subsequent months would be 7,000. This leaves a net deficit change of 28,797. No new units were accepted by MACV into the OB during the month of February.

11. Thus, 28,797 is deducted from the final January fix of 232,923 and we have the February OB of 204,126. The individual elements are attrited as follows:

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	<u>Down</u>	<u>To</u>
VC/NVA	15,569	122,931
NVA	4,907	72,793
VC	10,662	50,138
Administrative Service	3,975	33,725
Guerrillas	<u>9,253</u>	<u>47,470</u>
Total	28,797	204,126

12. MACV's 31 March 1968 retroactively adjusted OB includes a March estimate.

	<u>Nov 67</u>	<u>Dec 67</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
NVA	57,900	58,700	77,600	72,400	72,313
VC MF/LF, Co/Plt	60,300	60,400	61,300	50,600	50,128
Subtotal	<u>118,200</u>	<u>119,100</u>	<u>138,900</u>	<u>123,000</u>	<u>122,441</u>
Admin. Services	37,700	37,700	37,700	33,600	33,725
Guerrillas	80,561	75,509	60,409	54,499	46,183
Total	<u>236,461</u>	<u>232,309</u>	<u>237,009</u>	<u>211,099</u>	<u>202,349</u>

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